

October 23, 2008

This information is provided to the Great Salt Lake advisory Council as per their request for information from the presenters at the meeting to be held October 29, 2008 at the Department of Environmental Quality office, Salt Lake City Utah.

The following are answers to the advisory council's questions:

Currently I represent two organizations, the Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) and the Linking Communities, Wetlands and Migratory Birds Program (Linking). Both of these organizations have a decided interest in long-term ecosystem sustainability of the Great Salt Lake, especially bird habitats. Both of these organizations have expended considerable human and financial resources toward avian and habitat conservation. The IWJV has played a major partnership role in securing several million dollars of grant funds and matching funds used toward Great Salt Lake habitat enhancement and acquisition. The Linking program has helped foster the development of range wide migratory Bird habitat and community linkages within the footprint of many migratory birds that breed in Canada, migrate through Great Salt Lake and winter in Mexico.

Any pressure or condition that adversely affects sustainable indigenous and migratory birds and their habitats at the Great Salt Lake affects our organizations. Most of the causes related to Great Salt Lake habitat loss, reduction in habitat quality and fragmentation are consequences of anthropogenic activities. The Great Salt Lake has been highly modified through the construction of causeways that isolate extensive reaches of the Lake. There are several water issues related to habitat loss or management. These include water quantity, quality, seasonal availability and point of delivery. Urbanization is contributing to habitat loss especially upland buffering of wetlands. Some priority species nest in upland habitats but use wetlands during other aspects of their life history.

One opportunity for improvement of agency management and reduction of impacts to natural resources that this council might consider would be an operational policy that drives departmental and interdepartmental management decisions. This policy would be vetted by determining the Great Salt Lake resources that have the highest intrinsic value to the viability of a healthy ecosystem. Also resources that support, sustainable Lake economies including biotic and a biotic and that foster quality of life values of Utah's citizens. With these highest intrinsic values identified any state decision made would have to pass the muster that these values are held inviolate.

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